

PRESS RELEASE no. 33**Backstage assistant: German officer Gastorfer to attend twentieth consecutive Barum Rally**

Although he looks quite inconspicuous between all the powerful engines and fast cars and the fans can easily overlook him, Wolfgang Gastorfer is a highly important assistant for the drivers and their teams. The experienced German is one of the two Competitors' Relation Officers (CRO) working at Barum rally and as a delegated member of the organization staff, he arrived to Zlín for the twentieth time. What does his job involve?

"We serve as a link between the competing teams and the headquarters, that's my position. Once any type of incident, request, or whatever appears, they address them to us and it is our task to find out answers to their questions," explains Gastorfer.

"We should be experienced in sports regulations and also be multilingual. Nowadays, communication with team members(?) is essential. I personally don't speak any Czech and I hardly understand this language but apart from German I can speak English and a little bit Swedish and others."

In 2003(?), Gastorfer visited Zlín as an officer for the first time and since then, he has kept coming back to Barum Rally every single year. These days he is counting the number of his attendances to twenty.

"As a CRO you must be constantly available and present at the place. I did this kind of job only at Barum Rally for a long, long time because for the rest of the year, I work at different events in Germany and the rest of Europe as well in different roles. But then the Croatians wanted me twice for the same job at WRC Croatia Rally and this year, the people from Rally Islas Canarias (ERC) invited me too."

He even competed at Barum Rally once

Through the past years, the way Gastorfer works has naturally changed and as he says, the main communication channels are mobile phone and e-mail today. But from his point of view, the biggest improvement came during the covid time. **"In the, let's say, old times before Covid, the communication was more or less analogue, which took us plenty of time. There were a lot of papers being printed, documents distributed individually and they were handed to the teams against a signature,"** he describes.

"During the pandemic time, the process accelerated and excellently improved. Nowadays, we use an information system to communicate with the teams and we distribute the important documents through a mobile application. It is fast, very simple, and electronic."



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For the last two decades, Gastorfer has been a regular participant at Barum Rally, but he visited the traditional Czech competition for the first time much earlier – he took part in the rally as a racer in 1990. **“But that wasn’t a good year for us, we had technical problems from the very beginning. I think that I was much more successful here within the past twenty years as an officer or supporting organizer,”** the German smiles.

“In the 1980s, I was a co-driver in rally but just at an amateur level. First of all, I had to go to work and once we had some free time left, we joined these racing competitions with my driving colleague.”

Even though being an amateur, after ending his sports career Gastorfer felt that motorsport keeps attracting him. And that’s why he stayed in touch with it till now. **„Due to their experience and due to their relations with federations, you can find many former drivers among national or international officers and even more co-drivers. And what I am used to say – motorsport is like a big family! You meet many nice people and with attending more events the circle gets bigger and bigger. So, after you finally leave the car, you often still want to remain a part of this family,”** he says.

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